

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

STRIDE WITH PRIDE



BIG CATS - BIG OPPORTUNITIES



INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

S T R I D E W I T H P R I D E



Lion Photo by **Sandesh Kadur**

Tiger, Cheetah, Puma & Snow Leopard Photos by **Shivang Mehta**

Leopard Photo by **Tapan Seth**

Jaguar photo by **Lucas Bustamanteld**



WHY TO SAVE BIG CATS

 Shivang Mehta



 Madhya Pradesh Forest Department

Since time immemorial, Big Cats have been central to human imagination, influencing cultures and defining civilizations as icons of power, courage and majesty. Big Cats are crucial for maintaining the balance of ecosystems. As apex predators, they regulate prey populations, which helps to maintain the health of the landscapes and prevents overgrazing that can lead to ecological calamities like wildfires and disease. Protecting Big Cats also safeguards the habitats they roam, which are home to many other species, including some that are critically endangered and endemic, and repository for rich biodiversity. For instance, Asian elephant populations, Sumatran rhinos, and Sumatran orangutans all share landscapes with tigers. Moreover, these Big Cat habitats often ensure regional water security for humankind; for example, the rivers flowing from snow leopard territories are essential for over 300 million of humans in Asia. Besides conserving wilderness, these Big Cat habitats also provide a range of associated economic, social, cultural and spiritual services. Preserving these habitats not only safeguards these ecosystem services but also helps mitigating natural disasters, conserving soil, control pandemics, supports climate adaptation and contribute to climate change mitigation by storing and sequestering carbon. Big Cat conservation is also interwoven with local livelihood economy emanating from various income generation activities including sustainable wildlife tourism. Thus, saving Big Cats is not just about preserving a single species; it's about protecting entire ecosystem, countless other species and associated biodiversity, and vital resources for human populations.



EMERGENCE OF INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

 Shivang Mehta

Management challenges and ecological requirements for Big Cats are unique and novel from other species. This necessitates a specialised targeted conservation efforts for securing the future of Big Cats globally. No international body is, at present, exclusively addressing the conservation challenges of Big Cats across their range.

India has a long-standing experience on tiger agenda and exemplary conservation models for Big Cats like lion, snow leopard and leopard. Recent intercontinental translocation and successful implementation of Project Cheetah in India reaffirms country's leading role in Big Cat conservation. Acknowledging this, in the mega international event held at Mysuru, Karnataka on April 09, 2023 to commemorate 50 years of India's Project Tiger; the Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) for conservation of seven Big Cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma at global level. The Cabinet approved the establishment of IBCA, with its headquarters in India, on February 29, 2024.

The IBCA has been envisioned as a multi-country, multi-agency coalition, comprising of 95 Big Cat range countries, non-range countries with an interest in Big Cat conservation, conservation partners, scientific



organizations as well as business groups and corporates committed to supporting Big Cat conservation efforts. The primary objective of IBCA is to facilitate collaboration and synergy among stakeholders, consolidating successful conservation practices and expertise and replicating them in range countries. This unified approach, bolstered by financial support, aims to strengthen the conservation agenda and halt the decline in Big Cat populations. IBCA seeks to lead by example, bringing together range countries and other stakeholders on a common platform to champion the cause of Big Cat conservation on a global scale.

VISION

To secure the long-term conservation of the world's seven Big Cat species through advocacy, collaborative action and knowledge sharing so as to permit these majestic creatures to perform their ecological role.

OBJECTIVES

- Foster international cooperation and advocacy for conservation of major seven Big Cat species, their landscapes and biodiversity for a livable planet.
- Enhance knowledge exchange on Big Cat threats and solutions.
- Build capacity of range countries for effective Big Cat management.
- Raise global awareness and promote outreach activities about the importance of seven big cat conservation.
- Mobilize resources and explore synergy with International Bodies associated with conservation.

 Tapan Seth

 Rathika Ramasamy



KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Synergy through a collaborative platform for dissemination of best practices of Big Cat conservation
- Provide access to a central common repository of technical know-how and capacity building
- Strengthen the existing species-specific intergovernmental platforms, networks and transnational initiatives on conservation and protection
- Secure planet's ecological future and mitigate adverse effects of climate change for a livable planet.



ACTION PORTFOLIOS

There is a gap at present in the availability of resources, optimum utilization of available practices and processes which are based on robust science and converged with field craft in many big cat range countries. This gap stems primarily from the need to strengthen systematic and institutionalized delivery of capacity building and implementation measures and a shortage of suitable financing arrangements to apply fundamental tenets of Big Cat conservation on ground besides execution of innovative and novel technologies. These entail advocacy, engagement of international species experts and subject matter specialists, on-ground management interventions, extensive outreach and dissemination of knowledge products which would support and further strengthen the framework envisaged under IBCA at global scale.

IBCA envisages to address this for all Big Cat range countries, majority of whom face similar challenges such as habitat loss, habitat degradation, landscape fragmentation, illegal wildlife trade, poaching and human-wildlife conflict resulting in decline in Big Cat numbers besides poor status of prey and their habitat.



 Shibu Nair

IBCA envisions to address these issues by –

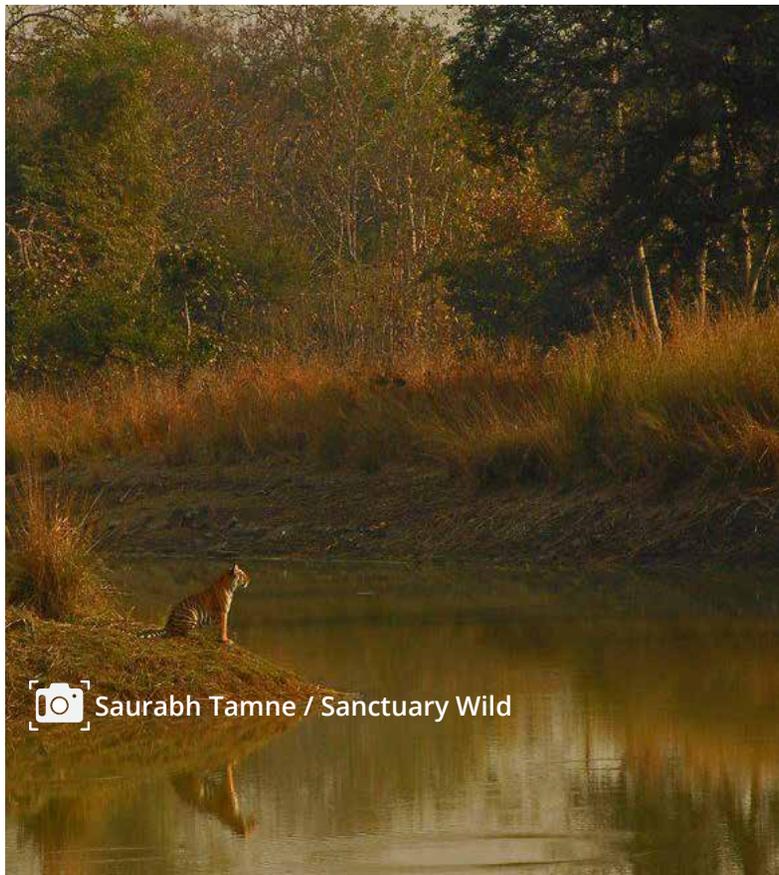
1. Situational analysis (SWOT) to understand the gaps of Big Cat conservation at global scale and range country level
2. Develop and facilitate implementation of species recovery plans (both national and transnational levels) for all Big Cats across their range
3. Advocate for international cooperation to address issues pertaining to Big Cat conservation such as habitat loss and degradation, landscape fragmentation, human-wildlife interface, wildlife trafficking
4. Capacity building of frontline rangers / officers, line agencies and other stakeholders
5. Skill development of local communities and other conservation agencies
6. Knowledge sharing, collaboration and technical backstopping
7. Intensify outreach and awareness programs at global scale

These envisaged action portfolios are likely to benefit cumulatively approximately 54 million km² Big Cat landscapes across the globe (as per International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN). These activities associated with conservation of Big Cats and their habitats would lead to consolidation of ecological conservation, amelioration of climate change and global warming issues with far-reaching environmental and socio-economic impacts.



IBCA

IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION



Saurabh Tamne / Sanctuary Wild

- **Shared responsibility:** Multi-stakeholder approach, collective efforts
- **Diverse expertise:** Broad perspectives and resources, comprehensive problem solving
- **Resource mobilization:** Funding from donors, public sector and business group support
- **Capacity building:** Knowledge and skill exchange, inclusion of traditional knowledge, centre of excellence and training programs
- **Scientific contributions:** Evidence based strategies, global scientific partnership
- **Policy advocacy:** Conservation policies and legal frameworks, decadal Action Plans for big cats
- **Community engagement:** Engage communities in conservation with cultural alignments and shared benefits
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Identifying the influence of gender roles and relations on the use, management and conservation of biodiversity
- **Private sector engagement:** Sustainable practices, corporate responsibilities
- **Transboundary collaboration:** Endorsement and support, strengthening protection, Species Recovery Plans
- **Monitoring & evaluation:** Robust progress tracking, adaptation of strategies
- **Sustainability integration:** Biodiversity in Development Plans, long-term focus
- **Global framework integration:** Aichi biodiversity targets and Kunming-Montreal global framework for biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation and well-being

IBCA GOVERNANCE

The formal structure of IBCA comprises of Assembly, Standing Committee and Secretariat headed by the Director General. The Assembly of the IBCA is the apex decision-making body which comprises of representatives from each Member Country. The Assembly at the Ministerial level is chaired by the Honourable Minister, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Republic of India in the capacity as President of the Assembly.

Each Member Country designates a National Focal Point for the IBCA in their country, which constitutes a permanent network of IBCA correspondents between the Parties. They interact with one another as well as key stakeholders to identify areas of mutual interest, design programme proposals, and make recommendations to the Secretariat regarding the implementation of the IBCA's objectives.



 Shivang Mehta

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Government of India's initial support of Indian Rs. 150 crores (approximately 18 million US\$) for 5 years (2023-24 to 2027-28)
- Contributions from bilateral and multilateral agencies; other appropriate institutions
- Mobilizing financial support from public sector organizations, national and international financial institutions and donor agencies

LIST OF BIG CAT RANGE COUNTRIES



| S. No. | Range Country |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Afghanistan |
| 2 | Algeria |
| 3 | Angola |
| 4 | Argentina |
| 5 | Armenia |
| 6 | Azerbaijan |
| 7 | Bangladesh |
| 8 | Belize |
| 9 | Benin |
| 10 | Bhutan |
| 11 | Bolivia |
| 12 | Botswana |
| 13 | Brazil |
| 14 | Burkina Faso |
| 15 | Burundi |
| 16 | Cambodia |
| 17 | Cameron |
| 18 | Canada |
| 19 | Central African Republic |
| 20 | Chad |

| S. No. | Range Country |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| 21 | Chile |
| 22 | China |
| 23 | Colombia |
| 24 | Congo |
| 25 | Costa Rica |
| 26 | Côte d'Ivoire |
| 27 | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| 28 | Djibouti |
| 29 | Ecuador |
| 30 | Egypt |
| 31 | El Salvador |
| 32 | Equatorial Guinea |
| 33 | Eritrea |
| 34 | Eswatini |
| 35 | Ethiopia |
| 36 | French Guiana |
| 37 | Gabon |
| 38 | Ghana |

| S. No. | Range Country |
|--------|-----------------|
| 39 | Guatemala |
| 40 | Guinea |
| 41 | Guinea-Bissau |
| 42 | Guyana |
| 43 | Honduras |
| 44 | India |
| 45 | Indonesia |
| 46 | Iran |
| 47 | Iraq |
| 48 | Kazakhstan |
| 49 | Kenya |
| 50 | Kyrgyz Republic |
| 51 | Lao PDR |
| 52 | Liberia |
| 53 | Libya |
| 54 | Malawi |
| 55 | Malaysia |
| 56 | Mali |
| 57 | Mexico |
| 58 | Mongolia |
| 59 | Mozambique |

| S. No. | Range Country |
|--------|---------------|
| 60 | Myanmar |
| 61 | Namibia |
| 62 | Nepal |
| 63 | Nicaragua |
| 64 | Niger |
| 65 | Nigeria |
| 66 | Oman |
| 67 | Pakistan |
| 68 | Panama |
| 69 | Paraguay |
| 70 | Peru |
| 71 | Russia |
| 72 | Rwanda |
| 73 | Saudi Arabia |
| 74 | Senegal |
| 75 | Sierra Leone |
| 76 | Somalia |
| 77 | South Africa |
| 78 | South Sudan |
| 79 | Sri Lanka |
| 80 | Sudan |

| S. No. | Range Country |
|--------|-------------------------|
| 81 | Suriname |
| 82 | Tajikistan |
| 83 | Tanzania |
| 84 | Thailand |
| 85 | Turkey |
| 86 | Turkmenistan |
| 87 | Uganda |
| 88 | United State of America |
| 89 | Uruguay |
| 90 | Uzbekistan |
| 91 | Venezuela |
| 92 | Vietnam |
| 93 | Yemen |
| 94 | Zambia |
| 95 | Zimbabwe |

BENEFITS TO RANGE COUNTRIES FOR BECOMING MEMBER OF IBCA



- By joining the IBCA, member countries can benefit from a repository of benchmarking Big Cat conservation best practices and technical know-how, which can be instrumental in enhancing their own conservation strategies.
- The alliance also envisages a mechanism for resource mobilization from various donors, which will be crucial for supporting initiatives aimed at protecting and conserving Big Cats and their habitats.
- The IBCA would strengthen existing species-specific intergovernmental platforms, networks, and transnational initiatives, fostering greater collaboration and knowledge sharing among member countries.
- Member countries also stand to benefit from capacity building and training for frontline staff, which is essential for effective on-ground conservation efforts. This includes eliciting local support for conservation initiatives, which is key to ensuring the long-term success of these efforts.
- The Alliance's emphasis on Big Cats as mascots for sustainable development and livelihood security aligns conservation efforts with broader global economic and development policies.
- IBCA with the support of existing inter-governmental agencies will serve as a platform for member countries and organizations to work together for policy advocacy, scientific and sustainable management of Big Cat's ecosystems, implement species recovery plans, develop conflict mitigation strategies, planning and capacity building of front-line staff, securing livelihood economy for local communities, scientific collaborations, private sector participation and technology aided conservation.
- With the conservation of Big Cats and their ecosystems, the IBCA will support achieving the range countries' ambitious targets towards climate mitigation and adaptation, ensure water and food security and livelihood and well-being of millions who depend on these Big Cat habitats and eventually meeting the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF IBCA

All the UN member countries can become member of IBCA. Once the Framework agreement is signed and conveyed through a *Note Verbale*, the country becomes a member of the IBCA. There is no joining fee or membership fee to become a member of IBCA.



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Partner Organization status may be granted by the Assembly to organizations that have the potential to help the IBCA to achieve its objectives, including regional inter-governmental economic integration organizations constituted by sovereign States and at least one of which is a member of IBCA.

The United Nations including its organs/agencies will be the Strategic Partner of the IBCA.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



1. Question: What is the status of International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)?

IBCA is a Treaty Based Inter-Governmental International Organisation with headquarters in India.

2. Question: What is the Mission and Vision of IBCA?

IBCA is established with a Mission and Vision to provide platform for partnership and cooperation among big cat range countries so as to ensure a viable population of seven big cats of the world, viz Lion, Tiger, Leopard, Snow-Leopard, Jaguar, Puma and Cheetah, in their habitat.

3. Question: What is the Objective of IBCA?

The primary objective of IBCA is to facilitate collaboration and synergy among stakeholders, consolidating successful conservation practices and expertise to achieve a common goal of conservation of big cats at global level. This unified approach, bolstered by financial support, aims to bolster the conservation agenda, halt the decline in big cat populations, and biodiversity conservation for a liveable planet.

4. Question: Is there any fee for joining/becoming member of IBCA?

There is no fee for joining/becoming the member of the IBCA. However, member countries, if so desire, may contribute voluntarily.

5. Question: How to formally apply for becoming member of IBCA?

In terms of Article XII of the Framework Agreement, countries interested in becoming parties to the Framework Agreement, can follow one of these procedures:

- i. Sign the Framework Agreement and subsequently deposit an instrument of ratification or acceptance or approval, through a Note Verbale, confirming completion of their internal legal procedures;

- ii. Alternatively, since the Framework Agreement is already in force, countries can directly submit an instrument of accession to become a party to the Framework Agreement.

6. Question: What is the Framework Agreement?

The Framework Agreement is an intent of the country to become member of IBCA.

7. Question: Whether the Framework Agreement has come into Force?

Yes, the Framework Agreement has come into force w.e.f. 23rd January, 2025.

8. Question: What is the difference between being a Member State and Signatory State?

Any country which has already completed the process as mentioned at Sr. No 5 of the FAQs is a member state.

The countries, who have signed the Framework Agreement but not deposited an instrument of ratification or acceptance or approval, through a Note Verbale, confirming completion of their internal legal procedures, are treated as signatory countries.

9. Question: What is the Assembly?

Assembly is the highest decision-making organ of the Organisation comprising of representatives appointed by the member countries.

10. Question: What is Standing Committee?

It is constituted by the Assembly to assist in effective and efficient functioning of the IBCA. It consists of ten (10) Focal Points of Member countries of IBCA.

11. Question: Who are the range countries?

Range Countries are the countries that have the natural habitat of big cats harbouring their population in the wild.

12. Question: Who are eligible to become a member of IBCA?

All the UN member countries are eligible to become the member of IBCA.

13. Question: Who are the partner organisations of IBCA?

Organisations that help IBCA to achieve its objectives and role can become partner organizations. As of September 2025, the following organizations have consented to be partner with IBCA:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Switzerland.
- Science and Conservation International Snow Leopard Trust, Kyrgyzstan
- Global Tiger Forum, India
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome
- UNWTO, Madrid
- Amur Tiger Centre, Russia
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – International
- World Customs Organization (WCO), Brussels
- UNDP, Nature Hub Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, New York
- Mobius Foundation New Delhi, India
- Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), Namibia
- Centre for Sustainable Green Economy, NOIDA, India

14. Question: How International organisations, International NGOs, Inter-government Organisations can become a Partner Organisation?

Any organisation which expresses its intent to join, must submit a written request to IBCA, which will be placed before the Assembly for approval. Once the Assembly approves, the organisation would be granted the status Partner Organisation of IBCA. United Nations including its organs/agencies are strategic partners of IBCA. The Partner Organisations can participate in the Assembly with no voting rights.

15. Question: Who are Observers of Framework Agreement?

Signatory countries who have not deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval. Other countries which have submitted an application to be an observer and International Organisations and non-governmental organisations acting in the field of conservation can also be observer.

16. Question: What is the frequency of holding the Assembly?

The meeting of Assembly of IBCA will be held at least once in two years. However, special sessions may be called on the request of the Member States or IBCA Secretariat.

17. Question: How International NGOs; Inter-government Organisations can become a Partner Organisation?

Any organisation which expresses its intent to join, must submit a written request to IBCA, which will be placed before the Assembly for approval. Once the Assembly approves, the organisation would be granted the status Partner Organisation of IBCA.

United Nations including its organs/agencies are strategic partners of IBCA. The Partner Organisations can participate in the Assembly with no voting rights.

18. Question: How frequent is the meeting of Focal Points held?

The meeting of the Focal Points can be held as per the requirement of IBCA.

19. Question: How will the countries benefit from joining IBCA?

IBCA is a potent tool for cooperation among countries for mutual benefit in furthering the conservation agenda of big cats. The IBCA has a multi-pronged approach in broad basing and establishing linkages in several areas and help in knowledge sharing, capacity building, networking, advocacy, finance and resources support, research and technical support, education and awareness.

20. Question: What is the Budget Management Plan of IBCA?

The Government of the Republic of India has approved Rs.150 crore (USD 18 Million) to IBCA for five years from 2023-24 to 2027-28. The IBCA will augment its Corpus by taking financial support from the public sector, private sector, bilateral and multilateral organisations, non-profit organisations and national and international financial institutions to make the organisation self-sustainable.

21. Question: What is the Financial year of IBCA?

The calendar year i.e. January to December is the financial year of IBCA.

22. Question: What financial/accounting norms are followed by IBCA?

IBCA is following UN norms for procurement of services and goods and its accounts are audited by the UN empanelled agency, as per International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

23. Question: Social Media handles of IBCA

For any clarifications about IBCA, apart from the website '<https://ibca.world>', for more updates about IBCA, the social media handles may also be followed:

- (i) Twitter(X): @IBCA_official
- (ii) You Tube: @IBCAofficial
- (iii) LinkedIn: international-big-cat-alliance
- (iv) Instagram: ibca_official

WAY FORWARD

By focusing on Big Cat conservation, the IBCA has the potential to create a ripple effect that benefits a wider range of species and ecosystems. Healthy Big Cat populations can contribute to maintaining the delicate balance of nature, which is crucial for mitigating climate change and promoting overall biodiversity conservation. For achieving these, IBCA would establish a Centre of Excellence for Big Cat Standards, which will be a pivotal step towards harmonizing conservation efforts. This center will serve as a Technical and Scientific Centre, focusing on the dissemination of best practices for big cat conservation.

Overall, the IBCA has the potential to be a powerful force in addressing the twin challenges of climate change and ensuring the long-term survival of Big Cats through its focus on advocacy, international collaboration, knowledge sharing, and community-centred conservation approaches. Let the Big Cats be mascots of sustainability !







 Shivang Mehta





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JOIN HANDS  JOIN ALLIANCE

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

H. No. 1/13, First Floor, Shanti Niketan, New Delhi 110021, India

Landline +91 11 450633497 | Mobile no +91 88003 04857

Email: secretariat@ibca.world
https://twitter.com/IBCA_official

www.ibca.world